Seven Keys Baldpate

EARLIDERR BIGGERS

"Well," she answered, and her voice ned softer than its wont, "I ain't ght much of that word for a good many years now. But when I do-say. seem to see myself sitting on our porch back home thirty years ago. I've got on a simple little muslin dress. and I'm slender as Elsie Janis, and the color in my cheeks is-well, it's the ort that Norton likes. And my hairbut I'm thinking of him, of Norton. He's told me he wants to make me happy for life, and I've about decided I'll let him try. I see him coming up our front walk, coming to call on me. Have I mentioned I've got a figure, a real sweet figure? That's about what remance means to me."

"Youth, dear?" asks Miss Norton gently. "That's it, dearle," answered the

older woman dreamily. "Youth." For a time those about the table sat in silence, picturing, no doubt, the slender figure on the steps of that porch long ago. Not without a humorous sort of pity did they glance eccasionally toward the woman whom Norton had begged to make happy. The professor of comparative literature was the first to break the silence.

"The dictionary," he remarked academically, "would define romance as a species of fictitious writing originally composed in the romance dialects and afterward in prose. But the dictionary is prosaic-it has no soul. Shall tell you what romance means to me? will. I see a man tolling in a dim laboratory. where there are strange ares and strange odors. Night and day be experiments, the love of his kind in his eyes, a desire to help in his heart. And then—the golden moment-the great moment in that quiet. dreary cell-the moment of the disnot. He gives it to the world and a few of the sick are well again and a few of the sorrowful are glad. Romance means neither youth nor power to me. It means-service."

He bent his dim old eyes on his food, and Mr. Magee gazed at him with a new wonder. Odd sentiments these from an old man who robbed freplaces, held up hermits and engaged in midnight conferences by the annex door. More than ever Magee was baffled, enthralled, amused. Now Mr. Max leered about the table and contributed his nasavory bit.

"Funny, ain't it." he remarked, "the different things the same word means to a bunch of folks. Say romance to me and I don't see no dim laboratory. don't see nothing dim. I see the brightest lights in the world and the best food and somebody, maybe. dancing the latest freak dance in between the tables. And an orchestra playing in the distance-classy dames all about-a taxi clicking at the door. And me sending word to the chauffour, 'Let ber click till the milk carts

rumble—I can pay.' Say, that sure is romance to me."

"Mr. Hayden," remarked Magee, "are we to hear from you?"

Hayden hesitated and looked for a noment into the black eyes of Myra My idea has often been contradict-

d." he said, keeping his gaze on the girl; "It may be again. But to me the greatest romance in the world is romance of money making-dollar piling on dollar in the vaults of the man who started with a shoestring and hope and nerve. I see him fighting for the first thousand—and then I see his pile growing, slowly at firstfaster-faster-faster-until a motorcar brings him to his office, and men speak his name with awe in the streets."

"Money," commented Miss Thornhill contemptuously. "What an idea of romance for a man!"

"I did not expect," replied Hayden. "that my definition would pass unchallenged. My past experiences"- he looked meaningly at the girl-"had led me to be prepared for that. But it is balcony. my definition-I spoke the truth. You must give me credit for that."

"I ain't one to blame you," sneered tion. Cargan, "for wanting it noticed when you do sidestep a lie. Yes, I certain-

"See here, Cargan," blazed Hayden. "Yes, you did speak the truth." put in Miss Thornbill bastily. "You menword in your delinition. It was a desecration to drag it in-hope. For me romance means only-hope. And I'm afraid there are a pitiful number in the world to whom it means the its .. hite glare Baldpate mountain same."

"We ain't heard from the young woman who started all this fuss over a little word," Mr. Cargan reminded meet, especially since the professor left

"That's right, dearle," said Mrs. Nor-

ton. "You got to contribute."

crisped like golden wire." "I will, but it's hard. One's ideas change so rapidly. A moment ago if you had said romance to me I might have babbled of shady corners, of whisperings on in the moonlight or even on the hotel balcony." She smiled gayly at Magee. "Perhaps tomorrow, too, the word might mean such rapturous things to me. But tonight-life is too real and earnest tonight. Service-Professor Bolton was right-service is often romance. It may mean the discovery of a serum-it may mean so cruel a thing as the blighting of another's life romance." She gazed steadily at the stolid Cargan. "It may mean putting an end forever to those picturesque parades past the window of the little room on Main street-the room where the boys can always find the mayor of

Still she gazed steadily into Cargan's eyes. And with an amused smile the mayor gazed back.

"You wouldn't be so cruel as that." he assured her easily; "a nice, attractive girl like you."

The dinner was at an end. Without a word the sly little professor rose from the table and hurriedly ascended the stairs. Mr. Magee watched him disappear and resolved to follow quickly on his heels. But first be paused to give his own version of the word under discussion.

"Strange," he remarked, "that none of you gets the picture I do. Romance -it is here-at your feet in Baldpate inn. A man climbs the mountain to be alone with his thoughts, to forget the melodrama of life, to get away from the swift action of the world and meditate. He is alone for very near an hour. Then a telephone bell tinkles and a youth rises out of the dark to prate of a lost Arabella and haberdashery. A shot rings out, as the immemorial custom with shots, and in comes a professor of comparative literature, with a perforation in his derby hat. A professional bermit arrives to teach the amateur the fine points of the game. A charming maid comes in-too late for breakfast-but in plenty of time for walks on the balcony in the moonlight. The mayor of a municipality condescends to stay for dinner. A battle in the snow ensues. There is a weird talk of-a sum of money. More guests arrive. Dark hints of a seventh key. Why, bless you, you needn't stir from Baldpate inn in search of your romance."

He crossed the floor hastily and put one foot on the lower step of Baldpate's grand stairway. He kept it there. For from the shadows of the landing Professor Bolton emerged, his blasted derby once more on his head, his overcost buttoned tight, his earmuffs in place, his traveling bag and green umbrella in tow.

"What, professor," cried Magee. "you're leaving?"

Now, truly, the end of the drama had come. Mr. Magee felt his heart beat wildly. "Yes," the old man was saying slow-

"I am about to leave. The decision came suddenly. I am sorry to go. Certainly I have enjoyed these chance meetings."

"See here, Doc," said Mr. Bland, uneasily feeling of his purple tie, "you're ot going back and let them reporters have another fling at you?"

"I fear I must," replied the old man. "My duty calls. Yes, they will bound me. I shall hear much of peroxide blonds. I shall be asked again to name the ten greatest in history-a difficult, not to say dangerous task. But I must face the-er-music, as the vulgar expression goes. I bid you goodby, Mr. Bland. We part friends, I am sure."

He turned to Magee. "I regret more than I can say," he continued, "parting from you, My eyes fell upon you first on entering this place. We have had exciting times together. My dear Miss Norton, knowing you has refreshed an old man's beart. I might compare you to another with yellow locks, but I leave that to my younger-er-colleagues. Mr. Cargan-goodby. My acquaintance with you I shall always look back

But the mayor of Reuton, Max and Bland closed in on the old man.

"Now, look here, Doc," interrupted Cargan. "You're bluffing. Do you get me? You're trying to put something over. I don't want to be rough. I like you. But I got to get a glimpse at the inside of that satchel. And I got to examine your personal makeup a bit."

"Dear, dear!" smiled Professor Bolton. "You don't think I would steal? A man in my position? Absurd! Look through my poor luggage if you desire. You will find nothing but the usual appurtenances of travel."

He stood docilely in the middle of the floor and blinked at the group around him.

Mr. Magee waited to hear no more. Quietly and quickly he disappeared up the broad stair and tried the professor's door. It was locked. Inside he could hear a window banging back and forth in the storm. He ran through No. 7 and out upon the snow covered

There he bumped full into a shadowy figure hurrying in the opposite direc-

CHAPTER XIX. A Man From the Dark.

OR fully five seconds Mr. Magee and the man with whom each other on the balcony. The identical moon of the summer romances now hung in the sky, and in glittered like a Christmas card.

"A lucky chance," said Mr. Magee. "You're a man I've been longing to his window open this afternoon."

"Indeed!" replied the other calmly. 'May I ask what you want of me?"

"A little package. I think it's in your pocket at this minute. A package no bigger than a man's hand."

The stranger made no reply, but looked quickly about over his shoulthe stair, of walks down the mountain | der at the path along which he had come and then past Mr. Magee at the road that led to freedom.

"I think it's in your pocket," repeat ed Mr. Magee, "and I'm going to find out."

"I haven't time to argue with you," said the holder of the seventh key. His voice was cold, calculating, harsh. "Get out of my way and let me pass

"Or what?" asked Billy Magee.

He watched the man lunge toward him in the moonlight. He saw the fist that had the night before been the Waterloo of Mr. Max and the mayor start on a swift, true course for his head. Quickly he dodged to one side and closed with his opponent.

Back and forth through the snow they ploughed, panting, grappling, straining. Mr. Magee soon realized that his adversary was no weakling. He was forced to call into play muscles he had not used in what seemed ages-not since he sported of an afternoon in a rather odorous college gymnasium. In moonlight and shadow, up and down, they reeled, staggered, stumbled, the sole jarring notes in that picture of Baldpate on a quiet winter's night.

"You queered the game last time," muttered the stranger. "But you'll never queer it again."

Mr. Magee saved his breath. Together they crashed against the side of the inn. Together they squirmed away across the balcony to the railing. Still back and forth, now in the moonlight, now in shadow, wildly they fought. Once Mr. Magee felt his feet slip from beneath him, but caught himself in time. His strength was



Up and Down They Reeled, Staggered and Stumbled.

going-surely-quickly. Then suddenly his opponent seemed to weaken in his grip. With a supreme effort Magee forced him down upon the balcony floor and tumbled on top of him. He felt the chill of the snow under his knees and its wetness in his cuffs.

"Now!" he cried to himself. The other still struggled desperately. But his struggle was without success, for deftly Billy Magee drew from his pocket the precious package about which there had been so much debate on Baldpate mountain. He clasped it close, rose and ran. In another second was inside No. 7 and had lighted

a candle at the blazing logs. Once more he examined that closely packed little bundle; once more be found it rich in greenbacks. Assuredly it was the greatly desired thing he had fought for the night be' e. He had it again. And this time, told himself, he would not lose sight of it until he had placed it in the hands of the girl

of the station. The dark shadow of the man he had just robbed was hovering at his windows. Magee turned hastily to the door. As he did so it opened and Hayden entered. He carried a pistol in his hand; his face was hard, cruel, determined; his usually expressionless eyes lighted with pleasure as they fell on the package in Mr. Magee's possession.

"It seems I'm just in time," he said, "to prevent highway robbery."

"You think so?" asked Magee. "See here, young man," remarked Hayden, glancing nervously over his shoulder. "I can't waste any time in talk. Does that money belong to you? No. Well, it does belong to me. I'm going to have it. Don't think I'm afraid to shoot to get it. The law permits a man to fire on the thief who tries to fleece him."

"The law, did you say?" laughed Billy Magee. "I wouldn't drag the law into this if I were you, Mr. Hayden. I'm sure it has no connection with events on Baldpate mountain. You would be the last to want its attention to be directed here. I've got this money and I'm going to keep it.' Hayden considered a brief moment

and then swore under his breath. "You're right," he said. "I'm not "No. This money was not concerned ways, you whippersnapper"- He dropped the revolver into his pocket "I see," answered the girl slowly. time within ten minutes Mr. Magee couldn't bear it if it were." steadied himself for conflict.

candle Magee saw Hayden's face go actually got the money. Somehow it white, his lips twitch, his eyes glaze with horrible surprise. His arms fell limply to his sides.

"Good God, Kendrick!" he cried.

Billy Magee had but a moment before struggled on the balcony answered; "Yes, Hayden. I'm back."

Hayden wet his lips with his tongue. "What-what brought you?" he asked, his voice trailing off weakly on the last word. "What brought me?" Suddenly, as

from a volcano that had long been cold, fire blazed up in Kendrick's eyes. "If a man knew the road from hell back home what would it need to bring him back?"

open. Almost a grotesque picture of were talking earnestly together and terror he looked in that dim light. Then he spoke in an odd, strained tone, more to himself than to any one

"I thought you were dead," he said. 'I told myself you'd never come back. Over and over-in the night-I told myself that. But all the time I knew -I knew you'd come."

A cry-a woman's cry-sounded from just outside the door of No. 7. Into the room came Myra Thornbill. Quickly she crossed and took Kendrick's hands in hers.

"David!" she sobbed. "Oh, David. is it a dream-a wonderful dream?" Kendrick looked into her eyes, sheepishly at first, then gladly as he saw what was in them. For the light there under the tears was such as no man could mistake. Magee saw it. Hayden saw it, too, and his voice was

even more lifeless when he spoke. "Forgive me, David," he said. didn't mean"-

And then as he saw that Kendrick did not listen he turned and walked quietly into the bedroom of No. 7, taking no notice of Cargan and Bland. who, with the other winter guests of Baldpate, now crowded the doorway leading to the hall. Hayden closed the bedroom door. Mr. Magee and the others stood silent, wondering. Their answer came quickly-the sharp cry of a revolver behind that closed door.

bedroom. The moonlight streamed in as it pains me to say it, no one will through the low windows and fell leave this room before 12:15." brightly on the bed. Across this Hayden lay. Mr. Magee made sure. It was not a pleasant thing to make sure | age in the girl's hand. of. Then he took the revolver from the hand that still clasped it. covered the quiet figure on the bed and stepped has annoyed the pot." back into the outer room.

"He—he has killed himself." he said in r low voice, closing the bedroom pompously before Magee. door behind him.

There was a moment's frightened

"Killed himself? I don't understand. Why should he do that? Surely not because-no"- He looked questioningly into the white face of the girl at his side; she only shook her head. "Killed himself," he repeated, like a man wakened from sleep. "I don't understand."

On tiptoe the amateur hermits of Baldpate descended to the hotel office. Mr. Magee saw the eyes of the girl of the station upon him. wide with doubt and alarm. While the others gathered in little groups and talked, he took her to one side.

"When does the next train leave for Reuton?" he asked her.

"In two hours-at 10:30," she replied. "You must be on it," he told her. With you will go the \$200,000 package. I have it in my pocket now." She took the news stolldly and made

"Are you afraid?" asked Magee gent-

ly. "You mustn't be. No harm can touch you. I shall stay here and see that no one follows."

"I'm not afraid," she replied. "Just startled, that's all. Did he-did he do it because you took this money-because he was afraid of what would



"I will shoot any one who makes move."

going to shoot. But there are other in-his death. That is an affair be-

and sprang forward. For the second "I'm so glad it wasn't-the money. I "May I call your attention." remark-

"Yes," agreed the girl with the "locks | "Certainty!" Mr. Magee laughed. | behind Magee. In the dim light of the rule of Tve done it has begun? I've true.

doesn't seem to thrill you the way I thought it would."

"But it does-oh, it does!" cried the girl. "I was upset for a moment. It's The voice of the man with whom glorious news. And with you on guard here I'm not afraid to carry it awaydown the mountain-and to Reuton. the journey."

She called Mrs. Norton, and the two went rather timidly upstairs together. Mr. Magee turned to his companions in the room and mentally called their roll. They were all there-the professor, the mayor, Max, Bland, Peters, place. At Newberry the best posted Miss Thornhill and the newcomer Ken- man politically, according to report, drick, a man prematurely old, grayed said Mr. Manning would get over 1,at the temples and with a face yellow- 000 votes in the county of Newberry Hayden stood with his mouth partly ed by fever. He and the professor in the first primary. now the old man came and stood before Magee.

"Mr. Magee," he said seriously, "I learn from Kendrick that you have in your possession a certain package of money that has been much buffeted about here at Baldpate inn. Now, I suggest-no, I demand"-

"Pardon me, professor," Mr. Magee interrupted. "I have something to suggest, even to demand. It is that you and every one else present select a chair and sit down. I suggest, though I do not demand, that you pick comfortable chairs, for a vigil that you of personal politics. are about to begin will prove a long

"What do you mean?" asked the mayor of Reuton, coming militantly to Professor Bolton's side.

Magee did not reply. Miss Norton and her mother came dowsstairs, the former wrapped in a great coat. She stood on the bottom step, her cheeks flushed, her eyes ablaze. Mr. Magee, going to her side, reflected that she looked charming and wonderful and wished he had time to admire, but he hadn't. He took from one pocket the pistol he had removed from the hand of Hayden; from the other the celebrated package of money.

"I warn you all," he said, "I will shoot any one who makes a move for place, the next consideration is intelthis bundle. Miss Norton is going to lect. And it is sometimes quite impostake it away with her. She is to catch sible in a limited acquaintance to esthe 10:30 train for Reuton. The train timate the degree of intellectuality It was Mr. Magee who went into the arrives at its destination at 12. Much

"You-crook!" roured Cargan. Mr. Magee smiled as he put the pack-

The little professor of comparative literature stepped forward and stood "One moment," he remarked. "Before you steal this money in front of

who I am and who I represent here." "This is no time," replied Magee, ter. "for light talk on the subject of

blonds.' "This is the time," said the professor warmly, "for me to tell you that Mr. Kendrick here and myself represent at Baldpate inn the prosecuting attorney

of Reuton county. We"-

rupted. sent you here? The rat! The pup! Why, I made that kid! I put him of fuss, especially if that one idea is where he is! He won't dare touch

"Won't he?" returned Professor Bolton. "My dear sir, you are mistaken. Drayton fully intends to prosecute you on the ground that you arranged to Richard I. Manning of Sumter. We puss ordinance No. 45, granting the had hesitated to express an opinion Suburban railway the privilege of up to the meeting of yesterday, for merging with the Civic (a exchange the writer has had a long and pleas-

for this bribe of \$200,000." "He won't dare!" cried Cargan. "I

made him!" "Before election," said the professor, I believe he often insisted to you that ne would do his duty as he saw it."

"Of course he did." replied Cargan. But that's what they all say." "He intends to keep his word."

> CHAPTER XX. The Professor Sums Up. HE mayor of Reuton slid into

the shadows. "As I was saying, Mr. Magee," continued the professor. law when I say you must turn this money over to me."

For answer Magee smiled at the girl. "You'd better go now," he said. "It's a long walk down the mountain."

"You refuse?" cried the professor. "Absolutely. Don't we, Miss Norton?" said Magee.

"Absolutely," she repeated bravely. thief, and this girl is your accomplice."

(To be Continued.)

Philosophy of One Bereaved. "Muh po', conflicted brudder," sol-

Accept It as the Truth.

A Chice to working girl has become a heroine by refusing to marry a capitalist. "I am all my aged father has to loan upon in his declining years. His home, 's my home, and I am going to remain here and care for him." This MANNING GOING STRONG.

Those Best Posted Politically Say Piedmont Will Give Him a Heavy Vote.

Anderson, Aug. 18 .- Richard I. Manning of Sumter is running strong I'll be with you in a moment ready for in the Piedmont section of the State. t is stated here by competent political observers that Mr. Manning will get more votes in Anderson county than any other candidate, with Clinkscales and Cooper in second

The Anderson Intelligencer, one of the strongest up-country papers, "came out" for Manning in the following editorial:

Elimination.

"The time comes when each voter his own responsibility to 'eliminate' the names of candidates from the ticket in order to get the name of the candidate whom he would prefer for office. The people have in late years forgotten the office in the ruck

"Putting men in office should be just ike putting men in charge of departments of industries. The first thing to be sought should be character, the second, ability, and then personality. No man should be given public office or honor or place of trust who is without honor or aracter or man-

"And then it is possible to have men in office who have character but no imagination or vision or purpose or largeness of perspective. It is necessary of course, to have character, but if two men of apparently the same degree of character offer for public of men in public life. When the chances are even, the voter should next refer to personality and suitabil-

"There are certain offices which re-"Possibly," he said; "but, Mr. Car- quire men of one temperment, other gan, the blackness of the kettle always offices require the services of men of entirely different cast of life. Some places require poise, others require aggressiveness. Some require technical training in the law or in the art of calculations, etc. But the office hush; then the voice of Kendrick rang our very eyes I want to inform you of governor of the State requires a man of common sense and of charac-

"We believe in a man who has his own respect, but sometimes a man may ride a hobby until he thinks he is a whole cavalcade of horsemen. Egotism is not necessarily a sign of force. Modesty along with self con-Cargan, big, red, volcanic, inter. fidence is the sign of the true man, the lovable man. The empty wagon "Drayton!" he bellowed. "Drayton rattles the loudest and the man with a single idea can make a great deal

his own importance. "With these few prefatory remarks we wish to say that our personal choice for governor of the State is ant personal acquaintance with every gentleman in the race for governor, and respects alike such men as Cooper, Irby, Browning, Mendel Smith, Richards, Clinkscales, Charles Carroll Sims and some of the others

who may be factors in the race. "We do not assert that Mr. Manning has any chance to win. We believe that he has. The eastern part of the State is strong for him. We hope that he is a factor in the race and we believe that he is from the manner in which he was attacked by the others. "Mr. Kendrick and I came up here to It is the lead horse in the race whom secure this package of money as evi- the trailers try to foul. And that dence against Cargan and-the man gives us the impression that Mr. above. I speak with the voice of the Manning is the leading candidate for the office of governor.

"We have long known him to be a man of character of vision, of sympathy, of honesty and of reliability. And we believe that if he is elected governor there will be in that office a man whom every South Carolinian will in time come to love. He is a "Then, sir," announced the old man | man of gentle manners but of uncrushingly, "you are little better than a doubted courage; he is a man who is proud of his State, proud of the men whose blood flows in his veins and before he would be guilty of one ignoble act as governor of the State, he would lay down his life.

"There are other splendid men in emnly said good old Parson Bagster, the race for governor and we will not "yo' should 'member dat de Lawd discount their ability, their capabilgiveth and de Lawd taketh away; ty or their character, but we believe blessed be de name o' de Lawd!" in truth that the man who would "Uh-well, sah," replied bereaved Broth- most honor South Carolina is Richard er Bolligee, who had just lost his I. Manning, of Sumter, who should fourth helpmeet, "whilst it's a fact dat de Lawd takes muh wives away, I for he would have been governor that to hustle munse'f, to git 'em in de fust place."-Kansas City Star. long ago but for the difference of opinion of the people of the State in the matter of handling the liquor

> The Imperial Tobacco company, which dropped off the market at the commencement of the European war,

But Hayden stopped. Some one had ed Magee, "to the fact that the long has so good a moral that one must reentered the room through the window reign of 'I'm going to' is ended and the fuse to inquire whether or not it be more to the number of buyers at this